

Board of Directors Teleconference September 25, 1997

The Board of Directors of the national Environmental laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) convened by teleconference on Thursday, September 25, 1997, at 1:30 p.m. The meeting was led by its Chair, Ms. Carol Batterton of the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission. A list of action items is provided as Attachment A and a list of participants is given in Attachment B.

Approval of Minutes of August 1997 Meeting

The minutes of the August meeting were approved with the following addition:

- Recommendation 1 was changed to read, “*ELAB recommends that EPA prepare a working set of PT sample design criteria which meet Program Office requirements to be used by the Proficiency Testing Oversight Body (PTOB) to include at a minimum, concentration, interferences, . . .*”

Ms. Mourrain reminded the members to send her a copy of their business card.

Consulting services for states

A discussion ensued regarding the issue of providing help to the states with questions they have in preparing legislation in preparation for NELAC accreditation. This issue will be given to John Anderson, Chair of the Accrediting Authority Committee to see if their committee might be able to help with questions.

Rescheduling next two meetings

The October 23rd meeting will remain the same (Bob Runyon will substitute for Barbara Finazzo who will not be able to attend). The November meeting will be on the 25th.

Policy on conducting meetings

Ms. Mourrain asked that the Board review the draft *Policy on Conducting Committee Meetings*. Minor changes were made to the policy, which will be distributed to the committee chairs for comment.

Indian Nation status

Ms. Mourrain reported that she had recently heard from Roger Bucholz. He stated that the Indian Nations were not interested in Accrediting Authority status if there would be any cost to them. They would probably want EPA to accredit them as is being done presently. Ms. Finazzo will survey the Regions to find out how many presently certify the Indian Nation labs for drinking

water. Ms. Mourrain will prepare a letter to notify the Indian Nations that they will have to pay for any reciprocal accreditation and for proficiency testing.

Communications with ECOS

Ms. Mourrain stated that Dr. Robert Stephens would be attending the ECOS meeting and that he was going to see if he could get NELAC on their agenda for a future meeting. Ms. Finazzo stated that she would also approach her Regional Administrator about getting on the agenda.

Interaction with the Regions

Ms. Finazzo reported on the Regional Research, Science and Technology Directors (RS&T) meeting that was being held in Seattle this week. Ms. Brenda Bettencourt, Ms. Finazzo and Ms. Mourrain gave a briefing on NELAC. She reported that a lot of questions were asked, especially about costs. Ms. Finazzo is going to put together an implementation plan for the Regions with a phased approach so they can see where their resources may have to be redirected. She reported that all the Regions are "on board". She stated that she and Ms. Mourrain would be working with EMMC to assure that NELAC meets the needs of the Program Offices.

Summary of meetings with WEF and NYAAEL/PA labs

Ms. Batterton reported that Mr. Coopwood expressed that the concerns he heard at the two meetings were the effect of NELAC on small labs and dual programs within a state. Ms. Mourrain will contact WEF to ascertain their continuing support. A discussion on information available to the states ensued. Ms. Irene Ronning will be asked to contact those states that intend to apply after the initial application period (Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 1997) to determine if there are any issues regarding small laboratories and dual systems.

Board Liaisons with Committees

The Omsbudman proposed plan was discussed. Each Board member was tentatively assigned to a committee to facilitate communication between the committees and the Board. The issue of the Board members attending the committee meetings would be left to the chair. The following assignments were made, pending approval of the committee chairs:

Ms. Finazzo	Accreditation Process
Dr. Jackson	Proficiency Testing & Field Measurement Ad Hoc
Ms. Bouchard	Policy & Structure
Ms. Mourrain	Accrediting Authority
Mr. Pearson	Implementation
Dr. Hartwig	On-Site Assessment
Mr. Cada	Quality Systems
Dr. Brokopp	Ad Hoc Transition
Mr. Coopwood	National Data Base Committee & Conference Management

Update on application process

Ms. Batterton reported that the Transition Committee proposed that the application forms be available on October 1, 1997, and that the deadline for submission would be December 1. June would be the date for the NELAP office to approve the first batch of accrediting authorities. Ms. Mourrain stated that South Dakota has taken itself off the "No" list and now would be applying for accreditation. She also stated that the New England states wanted to apply for the first round. It was decided that applications, whether complete or partial, should be submitted in December and, if partial, be completed as soon as possible thereafter. This issue was referred to the Transition Committee to have more flexibility in the first years to give the states more time.

Ms. Batterton stated that she will confirm with Wayne Davis the need to have the checklists and the training manual ready by November 1.

Hard copies of standards

Ms. Mourrain will talk to Mr. Coopwood about the timeliness of the Government Printing Office printing the standards. She also stated that some of the states need an EPA number to incorporate the standards by reference into state legislation or regulation.

Hazardous waste accreditation

Ms. Mourrain reported that Mr. Coopwood would meet with Barry Lesnik and Mike Wilson regarding their issues and concerns. Mr. Coopwood will let the Board know if additional discussions are needed.

Status of the Interim/Annual Meeting

Ms. Mourrain stated that the Interim Meeting was tentatively scheduled for the first week of December. A hotel has not yet been reserved because of end of year problems. Ms. Batterton reported that a hotel might be available in Austin for the next annual meeting. Dr. Jackson stated that the Sheraton in Saratoga Springs, NY is a possible meeting place for NELAC V.

Letters to the Governors

Dr. Hartwig discussed possible discrepancies in the memorandum regarding Environmental Laboratories that was sent to the State Legislatures. He will fax this to Ms. Mourrain and she will send a copy to the Board members for their information.

American Association of Industrial Hygiene

Dr. Brokopp reported that he had been approached by Jim Nelson, Data Chem Laboratories, about how the American Association of Industrial Hygiene could work with NELAC. They are interested to discussing being a PT provider, providing assessor training and performing on-site laboratory assessment. Dr Brokopp will contact Jim Nelson and setup a teleconference with Ms. Mourrain and Mr. Coopwood to discuss this.

Action Items
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Item No.	Action	Date Completed
1.	Members are to send Ms. Mourrain a copy of their business card.	
2.	Ms. Carol Batterton will contact Mr. John Anderson regarding any help the Accrediting Authority Committee might be able to give the states regarding questions they might have in preparing legislation on NELAC accreditation.	
3.	Ms. Mourrain will contact Mr. Ted Coopwood regarding rescheduling the November meeting.	
4.	Ms. Mourrain will send a copy of the draft <i>Policy on Conducting Committee Meetings</i> to the Committee Chairs for comment.	
5.	Ms. Finazzo will survey the Regions to find out if they are presently certifying Indian nations for drinking water.	
6.	Ms. Mourrain will prepare a letter to the Indian nations to let them know that they will be responsible for reciprocal and proficiency testing fees.	
7.	Ms. Finazzo will speak to her Regional Administrator about the possibility of getting NELAC on the agenda for a future ECOS meeting.	
8.	Ms. Finazzo will prepare an implementation plan for the Regions and she will also send verbiage regarding personnel qualifications to Ms. Prevost.	
9.	Ms. Mourrain will talk with Bob Nivens regarding WEF support.	
10.	Ms. Batterton will rewrite the language of the Ombudsman plan, present it to the Committee Chairs and get their feedback before the next BOD meeting.	
11.	Ms. Batterton will refer the issue of the application time line to the Transition Committee to give additional flexibility to the states applying for the first time.	

12.	Ms. Batterton will confirm with Wayne Davis the need to have checklists and the manual ready by 1 November 1997.	
13.	Ms. Mourrain will talk to Mr. Coopwood about the Government Printing Office printing the standards after each annual meeting.	
14.	Ms. Mourrain will fax a copy of the letters to the Governors and Legislators to the Board members for their information.	
15.	Dr. Brokopp will schedule a teleconference with Jim Nelson, AIHA, Ms. Mourrain and Mr. Coopwood to discuss their working with NELAC.	

Participants
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